

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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RAYS FROM THE EAST

(FRAGMENTS OF MSS., WRITTEN DOWN BY J...)

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The longings of no human heart are to be lightly set aside; each one of them is a sub-tone in the great harmony of life; each one is the cry of some brother who has often forgotten his language, but still feels his wants. In his heart burns, however feebly, the spark from the Divine ever seeking the way back to the centre from which it came.

True it is that a man may have been initiated, in his past lives, into many degrees of knowledge and power, who yet had not had certain experiences necessary before entering on the next degree; and furthermore, that not one single degree can be lost to him, even though he may now appear before you in a human garb not inviting, not puissant, not impetuous, nor in any sense free from faults.

* * once wrote: “An abyss opens behind each step; he cannot go back, and an irresistible impulse urges him forward.”

That “abyss” is the “era of achievement,” the passage from an “intermediate form” into a “new type.” It is *not* mere absorption. Absorption goes on for periods anterior to it. During the absorption, and after saturation, the being goes on assimilating. Adjacent tissue — so to say — alters by either what your scientists call *infiltration*, or by what Patanjali calls *supply of natures*. There could not be, when the process is completed, any recession to the old type after the intermediate form has disappeared. But truly, just as in your material world, during vast shadowy periods, the vacated — almost — intermediate types floated about until the *habit* of nature had changed and they became useless, and many beings had again and again reoccupied these forms, so in each daily life, or moral life, the intermediate forms remain until

your habit has totally altered. They then disappear for ever. So it is an abyss, great, profound, wide, silent and tenantless.

In a sense it is like the closed valve in the circulation, which permits no blood to engorge the heart. And the impulse that urges forward has its source in the great heart which urges on the astral light that makes our poor human hearts beat to and fro. And as the mere motion of the heart cannot be stopped at ease because it is the servant of the great heart, so the impulse cannot be resisted by him who has voluntarily gone into the vast circulation of the great Adam; who, urged on by reverberating echoes from a *living* past, has started toward the goal. Often he knows not why he does so, and is perhaps unaware that the echoes have transformed themselves, by the subtle alchemy of nature, into unconscious leanings very often called "atavistic" (wrongly) by scientific men. So he knows them not as echoes.

Perhaps failure to carry out a chosen plan is part of a necessary step. Our failures to encompass a set end are our best teachers, provided we recognize the real work that inevitably is contained in the failure.

The very rush of the onset made by him who impetuously enters *the path*, has in itself the recoil, and a brave ship is required; and not only a brave ship, but also the pilot called by the name "experience," and the captain who has sailed in many seas.

Each man keeps his own account — with his eyes closed; but his hand writes down the correct sums, and the balance *has to be struck*.

The examiner of accounts is deaf, dumb and blind; the entries are in relief, and he measures them by touch.

I charge you to give these words to those whom you know are waiting and anxious to hear or see any words of mine.

May we be guided towards the living Truth!

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It is provided in the essence of things that from any fruition of success, no matter what, shall come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary.

—WALT WHITMAN

REPLIES TO AN ENGLISH F.T.S.

[Replies to Questions I and II on the nebular theory and the nature of the sun were reprinted last month from the September 1883 *Theosophist*. The reply to Question III which appears here is from the same issue of *The Theosophist*.—Eds.]

QUESTION III

ARE THE GREAT NATIONS TO BE SWEEPED AWAY IN AN HOUR?

No such absurdity was ever postulated. The cataclysm that annihilated the choicest sub-races of the Fourth Race, or the Atlanteans, was slowly preparing its work for ages, as anyone can read in *Esoteric Buddhism* (page 54). "Poseidonis," so-called, belongs to historical times, though its fate begins to be realized and suspected only now. What was said is still asserted: every Root-Race is separated by a catastrophe, a cataclysm—the basis and historical foundation of the fables woven later on into the religious fabric of every people, whether civilized or savage, under the names of "deluges," "showers of fire" and suchlike.

That no "appreciable trace is left of such high civilization" is due to several reasons. One of these may be traced chiefly to the inability, and partially to the unwillingness (or shall we say congenital spiritual blindness of this our age!) of the modern archæologist to distinguish between excavations and ruins 50,000 and 4,000 years old, and to assign to many a grand archaic ruin its proper age and place in prehistoric times. For the latter the archæologist is not responsible—for what criterion, what sign has he to lead him to infer the true date of an excavated building bearing no inscription; and what warrant has the public that the antiquary and specialist has not made an error of some 20,000 years? A fair proof of this we have in the *scientific* and *historic* labelling of the Cyclopean architecture. Traditional archæology bearing directly upon the monumental is rejected. Oral literature, popular legends, ballads and rites, are all stifled in one word—*superstition*; and popular antiquities have become "fables" and "folk-lore." The ruder style of Cyclopean masonry, the walls of Tyrius, mentioned by Homer, are placed at the farthest end—the dawn of pre-Roman history; the walls of Epirus and Mycenæ—at the nearest. The latter are *commonly* believed the work of the Pelasgi and *probably* of about 1,000 years before the Western era. As to the former—they were hedged in and driven forward by the Noachian deluge till very lately—Archbishop Usher's learned scheme, computing that earth and man "were created 4004 B.C.," having been not only popular but actually *forced*

upon the educated classes until Mr. Darwin's triumphs. Had it not been for the efforts of a few Alexandrian and other mystics, Platonists, and heathen philosophers, Europe would have never laid her hands even on those few Greek and Roman classics she now possesses. And, as among the few that escaped the dire fate, not all by any means were trustworthy — hence, perhaps, the secret of their preservation — Western scholars got early into the habit of rejecting all heathen testimony, whenever truth clashed with the *dicta* of their churches. Then, again, the modern archæologists, Orientalists and historians are *all* Europeans; and they are *all* Christians, whether nominally or otherwise. However it may be, most of them seem to dislike to allow any relic of archaism to antedate the supposed antiquity of the Jewish records. This is a ditch into which most have slipped.

The traces of ancient civilizations exist, and they are many. Yet, it is humbly suggested that so long as there are reverend gentlemen mixed up unchecked in archæological and Asiatic societies; and Christian bishops to write the supposed histories and religions of non-Christian nations, and to preside over the meetings of Orientalists — so long will Archaism and its remains be made subservient in every branch to ancient Judaism and modern Christianity.

So far, archæology knows nothing of the sites of other and far older civilizations except the few it has stumbled upon, and to which it has assigned their respective ages, mostly under the guidance of biblical chronology. Whether the West had any *right* to impose upon *Universal* History the untrustworthy chronology of a small and unknown Jewish tribe, and reject, at the same time, every datum as every other tradition furnished by the classical writers of *non-Jewish* and *non-Christian* nations, is questionable. At any rate, had it accepted as willingly data coming from other sources, it might have assured itself by this time, that not only in Italy and other parts of Europe, but even on sites not very far from those it is accustomed to regard as the hotbed of ancient relics — Babylonia and Assyria — there are other sites where it could profitably excavate. The immense "Salt Valley" of Dasht-Beyad by Khorassan covers the most ancient civilizations of the world; while the Shamo desert has had time to change from sea to land, and from fertile land to a dead desert, since the day when the *first* civilization of the Fifth Race left its now invisible, and perhaps for ever hidden, "traces" under its beds of sand.

Times have changed, are changing. Proofs of the old civilizations

and the archaic wisdom are accumulating. Though soldier-bigots and priestly schemers have burnt books and converted *old* libraries to base uses; though the dry rot and the insect have destroyed inestimably precious records; though within the historic period the Spanish brigands made bonfires of the works of the refined archaic American races, which, if spared, would have solved many a riddle of history; though Omar lit the fires of the Alexandrian baths for months with the literary treasures of the Serapeum; though the sibylline and other mystical books of Rome and Greece were destroyed in war; though the South Indian invaders of Ceylon "heaped into piles as high as the tops of the cocoanut trees" the *ollas* of the Buddhists and set them ablaze to light their victory, thus obliterating from the world's knowledge early Buddhist annals and treatises of great importance: though this hateful and senseless Vandalism has disgraced the career of most fighting nations — still, despite everything, there are extant abundant proofs of the history of mankind, and bits and scraps come to light from time to time by what science has often called "most curious coincidences." Europe has no very trustworthy history of her own vicissitudes and mutations, her successive races and their doings. What with their savage wars, the barbaric habits of the historic Goths, Huns, Franks, and other warrior nations, and the interested literary Vandalism of the shaveling priests who for centuries sat upon its intellectual life like a nightmare, an antiquity could not exist for Europe. And, having no Past to record themselves, the European critics, historians and archæologists have not scrupled to deny one to others — whenever the concession excited a sacrifice of biblical prestige.

No "traces of old civilizations," we are told! And what about the Pelasgi — the direct forefathers of the Hellenes, according to Herodotus? What about the Etruscans — the race mysterious and wonderful, if any, for the historian, and whose origin is the most unsolvable of problems? That which is known of them only shows that could something more be known, a whole series of prehistoric civilizations might be discovered. A people described as are the Pelasgi — a highly intellectual, receptive, active people, chiefly occupied with agriculture, warlike when necessary, though preferring peace; a people who built canals as no one else, subterranean water-works, dams, walls, and Cyclopean buildings of most astounding strength; who are even *suspected* of having been the inventors of the so-called Cadmean or Phœnician writing characters from which all European alphabets are derived — who were they? Could they be shown by any possible means as the

descendants of the biblical *Peleg* (*Gen.* x. 25), their high civilization would have been thereby demonstrated, though their antiquity would still have to be dwarfed to 2247 "B.C." And who were the Etruscans? Shall the Easterns like the Westerns be made to believe that between the high civilizations of the pre-Roman (and we say — *prehistoric*) *Tursenoï* of the Greeks, with their 12 great cities *known* to history; their Cyclopean buildings, their plastic and pictorial arts, and the time when they were a nomadic tribe "first descended into Italy from their northern latitudes" — only a few centuries elapsed? Shall it be still urged that the Phœnicians with their Tyre 2750 "B.C." (a chronology, accepted by *Western* history), their commerce, fleet, learning, arts and civilization, were only a few centuries before the building of Tyre but "a small tribe of Semitic fishermen"? Or, that the Trojan war could not have been earlier than 1184 B.C., and thus *Magna Græcia* must be fixed somewhere between the eighth and the ninth century "B.C.," and by no means thousands of years before, as was claimed by Plato and Aristotle, Homer and the Cyclic Poems, derived from, and based upon, other records millenniums older?

If the Christian historian, hampered by his chronology, and the free-thinker by lack of necessary data, feel bound to stigmatize every *non-Christian* or *non-Western* chronology as "obviously fanciful," "purely mythical," and "not worthy of a moment's consideration," how shall one wholly dependent upon Western guides get at the truth? And if these incompetent builders of Universal History can persuade their public to accept as authoritative their chronological and ethnological reveries, why should the Eastern student, who has access to quite different — and we make bold to say, more trustworthy — materials, be expected to join in the blind belief of those who defend Western historical infallibility? He believes, on the strength of the documentary evidence left by Yavanacharya (Pythagoras) 607 "B.C." in India, and that of his own national "temple records," that instead of giving hundreds we may safely give thousands of years to the foundation of *Cumæ* and *Magna Græcia*, of which it was the pioneer settlement. That the civilization of the latter had already become effete when Pythagoras, the great pupil of Aryan Masters, went to Croton. And, having no biblical bias to overcome, he feels persuaded that, if it took the Celtic and Gaelic tribes *Britannicæ Insulæ*, with the ready-made civilizations of Rome before their eyes, and acquaintance with that of the Phœnicians whose trade with them began a thousand years before the Christian era; and to crown all with the definite help later

of the Normans and Saxons — two thousand years before they could build their mediæval cities, not even remotely comparable with those of the Romans; and it took them two thousand five hundred years to get half as civilized; then, that instead of that hypothetical period, benevolently styled the childhood of the race, being within easy reach of the Apostles and the early Fathers, it must be relegated to an enormously earlier time. Surely if it took the barbarians of Western Europe so many centuries to develop a language and create empires, then the nomadic tribes of the “mythical” periods ought in common fairness — since they never came under the fructifying energy of that Christian influence to which we are asked to ascribe all the scientific enlightenment of this age — about ten thousand years to build their Tyres and their Veii, their Sidons and Carthagenes. As *other* Troys lie under the surface of the topmost one in the Troad; and other and higher civilizations were exhumed by Mariette Bey under the stratum of sand from which the archæological collections of Lepsius, Abbott, and the British Museum were taken; and six Hindu “Delhis,” superposed and hidden away out of sight, formed the pedestal upon which the Mogul conqueror built the gorgeous capital whose ruins still attest the splendour of his Delhi; so when the fury of critical bigotry has quite subsided, and Western men are prepared to write history in the interest of truth alone, will the proofs be found of the cyclic law of civilization. Modern Florence lifts her beautiful form above the tomb of Etruscan Florentia, which in her turn rose upon the hidden vestiges of anterior towns. And so also Arezzo, Perugia, Lucca and many other European sites now occupied by modern towns and cities, are based upon the relics of archaic civilizations whose period covers ages incomputable, and whose names Echo has forgotten to even whisper through “the corridors of Time.”

When the Western historian has finally and unanswerably proven who were the Pelasgi, at least, and who the Etruscans, and the as mysterious Iapygians, who seem also to have had an earlier acquaintance with writing — as proved by their inscriptions — than the Phœnicians, then only may he menace the Asiatic into acceptance of his own arbitrary data and dogmas. Then also may he tauntingly ask, “How it is that no appreciable trace is left of such high civilizations as are described in the Past?”

“Is it supposed that the present European civilization with its offshoots . . . can be destroyed by any inundation or conflagration?” More easily than was many another civilization. Europe has neither the Tita-

nic and Cyclopean masonry of the Ancients, nor even its parchments, to preserve the records of its "existing arts and languages." Its civilization is too recent, too rapidly growing, to leave any positively indestructible relics of either its architecture, arts or sciences. What is there in the whole Europe that could be regarded as even approximately indestructible, without mentioning the *débâcle* of the geological upheaval that follows generally such cataclysms? Is it its ephemeral Crystal Palaces, its theatres, railways, modern fragile furniture; or its electric telegraphs, phonographs, telephones and micrographs? While each of the former is at the mercy of fire and cyclone, the last enumerated marvels of modern science can be destroyed by a child breaking them to atoms. When we know of the destruction of the "Seven World's Wonders," of Thebes, Tyre, the Labyrinth and the Egyptian pyramids and temples and giant palaces, as we now see slowly crumbling into the dust of the deserts, being reduced to atoms by the hand of Time — lighter and far more merciful than any cataclysm — the question seems to us rather the outcome of modern pride than of stern reasoning.

Is it your daily newspapers and periodicals, rags of a few days; your fragile books bearing the records of all your grand civilization, withal liable to become annihilated after a few meals are made on them by the white ants, that are regarded as invulnerable? And why should European civilization escape the common lot? It is from the lower classes, the units of the great masses who form the majorities in nations, that survivors will escape in greater numbers — and these know nothing of the arts, sciences, or languages except their own, and those very imperfectly. The arts and sciences are like the Phœnix of old: they die but to revive. The curious rush of human progress within the last two thousand years, and the abnormal rapidity with which one discovery follows the other, ought to be a sign to human intuition that what you look upon in the light of "discoveries" are merely *re-discoveries*, which, following the law of gradual progress, you make more perfect, yet in enunciating, you are not the first to explain them. We learn more easily that which we have heard about, or learnt in childhood. If, as averred, the Western nations have separated themselves from the great Aryan stock, it becomes evident that the races that first peopled Europe were inferior to the root-race which had the Vedas and the pre-historic Rishis. That which your far-distant forefathers had heard in the secrecy of the temples was not lost. It reached their posterity, which is now simply improving upon details.

THE EGO*

Soul being a generic term, there are in men three *aspects* of Soul — the terrestrial, or animal; the Human Soul; and the Spiritual Soul; these, strictly speaking, are one Soul in its three aspects.

You have to first study the dual sets of “principles”: the *spiritual*, or those which belong to the imperishable Ego; and the *material*, or those principles which make up the ever-changing bodies or the series of personalities of that Ego. Let us fix permanent names to these, and say that:

(1) *Atma*, the “*Higher Self*,” is neither your Spirit nor mine, but like sunlight shines on all. It is the universally diffused “*divine principle*.”

(2) *Buddhi* (the spiritual soul) is only its vehicle, and is unconscious *on this plane*. Neither each separately, nor the two collectively, are of any more use to the body of man than sunlight and its beams are for a mass of granite buried in the earth, *unless the divine Duad is assimilated by, and reflected in, some consciousness*. This consciousness or mind is *Manas*. The SPIRITUAL *divine EGO*, therefore, is the Spiritual soul or *Buddhi*, in close union with *Manas*, the mind-principle, without which it is no EGO at all, but only the *Atmic Vehicle*.

(3) The INNER, or HIGHER “Ego” is *Manas*, the “Fifth” Principle, so called, independently of *Buddhi*. The Mind-Principle is only the Spiritual Ego when merged *into one* with *Buddhi*. It is the permanent *Individuality* or the “Reincarnating Ego,” and our various and numberless personalities only its external masks. The higher or permanent *Ego* in us must not be confused with what we call the “Higher Self.”

Manas is the derivation or product in a reflected form of *Ahamkara*, “the conception of I,” or EGO-SHIP. It is, therefore, when inseparably united to the first two, called the SPIRITUAL EGO, and *Taijasi* (the radiant). This is the real Individuality, or the divine man. It is this Ego which — having originally incarnated in the *senseless* human form animated by, but unconscious (since it had no consciousness) of, the presence in itself of the dual monad — made of that human-like form *a real man*. It is that Ego, that “Causal Body,” which overshadows every personality Karma forces it to incarnate into; and this Ego which is held responsible for all the sins committed through, and in, every

* Collated from *The Key to Theosophy* and the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*.

new body or personality — the evanescent masks which hide the true Individual through the long series of rebirths.

Taijasi is, therefore, Manas with the light of Buddhi reflected on it. *Taijasi* means the radiant in consequence of its union with Buddhi; *i.e.*, Manas, the human soul, illuminated by the radiance of the divine soul. Therefore, Manas-taijasi may be described as radiant mind; the *human* reason lit by the light of the spirit; and Buddhi-Manas is the revelation of the divine *plus* human intellect and self-consciousness. One who has no inner perception of, and faith in, the immortality of his soul, in that man the soul can never become Buddhi-taijasi, but will remain simply Manas, and for Manas alone there is no immortality possible.

Pythagoras, Plato, Timaeus of Locris, and the old Alexandrian School, derived the *Soul* of man (or his higher "principles" and attributes) from the Universal World Soul. Both the *human* Spirit (or the individuality), the reincarnating Spiritual Ego, and Buddhi, the Spiritual soul, are pre-existent. But, while the former exists as a distinct entity, an individualization, the soul exists as pre-existing breath, an unscient portion of an intelligent whole.

All our "Egos" are thinking and rational entities (*Manasa-putras*) who had lived, whether under human or other forms, in the precedent *life-cycle* (Manvantara), and whose Karma it was to incarnate in the *man* of this one.

Try to imagine a "Spirit," a celestial Being, whether we call it by one name or another, divine in its essential nature, yet not pure enough to be *one with the ALL*, and having, in order to achieve this, to so purify its nature as to finally gain that goal. It can do so only by passing *individually* and *personally*, *i.e.*, spiritually and physically, through every experience and feeling that exists in the manifold or differentiated Universe. It has, therefore, after having gained such experience in the lower kingdoms, and having ascended higher and still higher with every rung on the ladder of being, to pass through every experience on the human planes. In its very essence it is THOUGHT, and is, therefore, called in its plurality *Manasa putra*, "the Sons of the (Universal) mind." This *individualized* "Thought" is what we Theosophists call the *real* human Ego, the thinking Entity imprisoned in a case of flesh and bones. This is surely a Spiritual Entity, not *Matter*, and such Entities are the incarnating EGOS that inform the bundle of animal matter called mankind, and whose names are *Manasa* or "Minds." But once impris-

oned, or incarnate, their essence becomes dual: that is to say, the rays of the eternal divine Mind, considered as individual entities, assume a twofold attribute which is (a) their *essential* inherent characteristic, heaven-aspiring mind (higher *Manas*) and (b) the human quality of thinking, or animal cogitation, rationalized owing to the superiority of the human brain, the *Kama*-tending or lower *Manas*. One gravitates toward *Buddhi*; the other, tending downward, to the seat of passions and animal desires. It is the Ego, the Manasic Entity, which is held responsible for all the sins of the lower attributes, just as a parent is answerable for the transgressions of his child, so long as the latter remains irresponsible.

(4) The LOWER, or PERSONAL "Ego" is the physical man in conjunction with his *lower* Self, *i.e.*, animal instincts, passions, desires, etc. It is called the "false personality," and consists of the *lower Manas* combined with *Kama*, and operating through the physical body and its phantom or "double." Lower *Manas* is usually called the animal soul (the *Nephesh* of the Hebrew Kabalists). It is the ray which emanates from the Higher *Manas* or permanent Ego, and is that "principle" which forms the human mind — in animals, instinct.

The physical animal man is as little responsible as a dog or a mouse. For the bodily form all is over with the death of the body. But the real SELF, that which emanated its own shadow, or the lower thinking personality, that enacted and pulled the wires during the life of the physical automaton, will have to suffer conjointly with its *factotum and alter ego* in its next incarnation.

The two, the higher and the lower, *Manas* are one, and yet they are not — and that is the great mystery. The Higher *Manas* or Ego is essentially divine, and therefore pure; no stain can pollute it, as no punishment can reach it, *per se*, the more so since it is innocent of, and takes no part in, the deliberate transactions of its Lower Ego. Yet by the very fact that, though dual and during life the Higher is distinct from the Lower, "the Father and Son" *are one*, and because that in reuniting with the parent Ego, the Lower Soul fastens upon and impresses upon it all its bad as well as good actions — both have to suffer, the Higher Ego, though innocent and without blemish, has to bear the punishment of the misdeeds committed by the *lower* Self together with it in their future incarnation. *The Secret Doctrine* shows that the *Manasa-Putras* or incarnating EGOS have taken upon themselves, voluntarily and knowingly, the burden of all the future sins of

their future personalities. Thence it is easy to see that it is neither Mr. A. nor Mr. B., nor any of the personalities that periodically clothe the Self-Sacrificing Ego, which are the real Sufferers, but verily the innocent *Christos* within us. Hence the mystic Hindus say that the Eternal Self, or the Ego (the one in three and three in one), is the "Charioteer" or driver; the personalities are the temporary and evanescent passengers; while the horses are the animal passions of man.

What is the distinction between the "true individuality" and the "I" or "Ego" of which we are all conscious? We must argue upon what is meant by "I" or "Ego." We distinguish between the simple fact of self-consciousness, the simple feeling that "I am I," and the complex thought that "I am Mr. Smith" or "Mrs. Brown." Believing as we do in a series of births for the same Ego, or reincarnation, this distinction is the fundamental pivot of the whole idea. You see "Mr. Smith" really means a long series of daily experiences strung together by the thread of memory, and forming what Mr. Smith calls "himself." But none of these "experiences" are really the "I" or the Ego, nor do they give "Mr. Smith" the feeling that he is himself, for he forgets the greater part of his daily experiences, and they produce the feeling of *Egoity* in him only while they last. We Theosophists, therefore, distinguish between this bundle of "experiences," which we call the *false* (because so finite and evanescent) *personality*, and that element in man to which the feeling of "I am I" is due. It is this "I am I" which we call the *true* individuality; and we say that this "Ego" or individuality plays, like an actor, many parts on the stage of life. Let us call every new life on earth of the same *Ego* a *night* on the stage of a theatre. One night the actor, or "Ego," appears as "Macbeth," the next as "Shylock," the third as "Romeo," the fourth as "Hamlet" or "King Lear," and so on, until he has run through the whole cycle of incarnations. The Ego begins his life-pilgrimage as a sprite, an "Ariel," or a "Puck"; he plays the part of a *super*, is a soldier, a servant, one of the chorus; rises then to "speaking parts," plays leading *rôles*, interspersed with insignificant parts, till he finally retires from the stage as "Prospero," the *magician*.

Remember the practically universal teaching of the two kinds of conscious existence: the terrestrial and the spiritual. The latter must be considered real from the very fact that it is inhabited by the eternal, changeless and immortal Monad; whereas the incarnating Ego dresses itself up in new garments entirely different from those of its previous

incarnations, and in which all except its spiritual prototype is doomed to a change so radical as to leave no trace behind.

Immortality is but one's unbroken consciousness; and the *personal* consciousness can hardly last longer than the personality itself, can it? And such consciousness survives only throughout Devachan, after which it is reabsorbed, first, in the *individual*, and then in the *universal* consciousness. Your spiritual "I" is immortal; but from your present self it can carry away into Eternity that only which has become worthy of immortality, namely, the aroma alone of the flower that has been mown by death. Collecting from every terrestrial personality, into which Karma forces it to incarnate, the nectar alone of the spiritual qualities and self-consciousness, it unites all these into one whole and emerges from its chrysalis as the glorified Dhyan Chohan.

Reincarnation is, therefore, a belief in a perpetual progress for each incarnating Ego, or divine soul, in an evolution from the outward into the inward, from the material to the Spiritual, arriving at the end of each stage at absolute unity with the divine Principle. From strength to strength, from the beauty and perfection of one plane to the greater beauty and perfection of another, with accessions of new glory, of fresh knowledge and power in each cycle, such is the destiny of every Ego, which thus becomes its own Saviour in each world and incarnation.

The Spiritual Ego can act only when the personal Ego is paralysed. The Spiritual "I" in man is omniscient and has every knowledge innate in it; while the personal self is the creature of its environment and the slave of the physical memory. Could the former manifest itself uninterruptedly, and without impediment, there would be no longer men on earth, but we should all be gods. The more these impediments are removed, in other words, the more the physical body is paralysed, as to its own independent activity and consciousness, as in deep sleep or deep trance, or, again, in illness, the more fully can the *inner* Self manifest on this plane.

Are there no modes of communication between the Spiritual and human consciousness or memory? Of course there are; but they have never been recognized by your scientific modern psychologists. To what do you attribute intuition, the "voice of the conscience," premonitions, vague undefined reminiscences, etc., etc., if not to such communications?

The higher principles [Buddhi and Atma] are entirely inactive on our plane, and the higher Ego (*Manas*) itself is more or less dormant during the waking of the physical man. So dormant are the Spiritual faculties,

because the Ego is so trammelled by matter, that *It* can hardly give all its attention to the man's actions, even should the latter commit sins for which that Ego — when reunited with its *lower* Manas — will have to suffer conjointly in the future. It is the impressions projected into the physical man by this Ego which constitute what we call "conscience"; and in proportion as the Personality, the lower Soul (or *Manas*), unites itself to its higher consciousness, or Ego, does the action of the latter upon the life of mortal man become more marked. That which we call will has its seat in the higher Ego, and the latter, when it is rid of its sin-laden personality, is divine and pure.

The external life is a "dream" to this Ego, while the inner life, or the life on what we call the dream plane, is the real life for it. The universal consciousness of the real Ego transcends a millionfold the self-consciousness of the personal or false Ego.

We might well compare the real Ego to a prisoner, and the physical personality to the gaoler of his prison. During the waking hours the thoughts and Voice of the Higher Ego do or do not reach his gaoler — the physical man, for they are the *Voice of his Conscience*. When we remain deaf to the Voice of our Conscience, we crucify the Christos within us. Our *Ego* lives its own separate life within its prison of clay whenever it becomes free from the trammels of matter, *i.e.*, during the sleep of the physical man. This Ego it is which is the actor, the real man, the true human self. Were the Personalities (Lower Manas or the *physical* minds) to be inspired and illumined solely by their higher *alter Egos* there would be little sin in this world. But they are not; and getting entangled in the meshes of the Astral Light, they separate themselves more and more from their parent Egos.

The self which is free from sin, free from old age, from death and grief, from hunger and thirst, which desires nothing but what it ought to desire and imagines nothing but what it ought to imagine, that it is which we must search out, which we must try to understand.

—*Chandogya Upanishad*

THE OBLIGATORY PILGRIMAGE

All manifestation is pervaded not only by life but also by intelligence and consciousness, though in the lower kingdoms there is no self-consciousness. Man alone possesses self-consciousness — the knowledge of oneself as distinct from other selves. Just as there are numerous grades of matter, *e.g.*, solid, liquid and gaseous, so there is a wide range of expression of consciousness.

In the animal kingdom there is instinct which shows a semblance of intelligence. What is the difference between animal and human intelligence? We can see it by considering the nature of the intelligence and consciousness in the living organs of our body. The beating of our heart is not self-consciously directed but shows instinctive intelligence in the organism, as do other vital processes. Digestion and assimilation, for instance, do not require our conscious direction. We should eat self-consciously, with some basis of reasoned choice, but once the food is eaten we have no concern with it unless something goes wrong. The “mind” in the dog or cat is similar to the “mind” which regulates these bodily processes in ourselves.

In the vegetable kingdom there is sensation, as science has shown, though the plant can do nothing to help itself to get food, water, etc., unless these are made available from outside. Even the mineral kingdom shows life and intelligence, as witness the formation of crystals and the combination of chemical elements. Theosophy says that below the mineral kingdom there are three kingdoms of elemental beings — still unrecognized by science, though found in various religious philosophies — whether they are called *devatas* or angels.

The universe is a congeries of units of consciousness, either human, sub-human (those which have not yet reached the human stage of self-consciousness), or super-human (those who have transcended the limitations of ordinary humanity). Life in its pristine state is Spirit, instinct with divine intelligence. It is made up of units of intelligence, the Eternal Pilgrims. Each has to make a long pilgrimage to reach human self-consciousness, to acquire the principle known as Manas or mind.

The pilgrimage throughout the period of manifestation may be pictured as a great circle, one arc descending from the world of Spirit to that of gross matter, the other ascending to the world of Spirit once more. We start in innocence but in ignorance and have to go through all the kingdoms of Nature before the great change can occur and we can enter the human kingdom. Then, by our own efforts we can enter

the superhuman stage, which is the purpose of the whole pilgrimage. The descent in terms of self-consciousness is unconscious; the ascent, conscious and deliberate. The process for the descent is *natural impulse*; for the ascent, *self-induction*. Choice in the lower kingdoms is in terms of instinct of the particular species and type. No lower animal can deliberately change its nature.

We as human beings have the power of free will, though natural impulse is still in us — in some, unfortunately, to a great extent. Carbon and oxygen in a certain proportion make a poisonous gas and cannot choose to make anything else, but we can make every contact with another soul a good or an evil experience. Man has to energize himself.

“The pivotal doctrine of the Esoteric philosophy admits no privileges or special gifts in man, save those won by his own Ego through personal effort and merit throughout a long series of metempsychoses and reincarnations,” says *The Secret Doctrine*. People brought up in the false notion that privileges and advancement can be bestowed in answer to prayer are disappointed with the idea that they must earn everything themselves and that privileges are in terms of duties faithfully performed. The greatest Teacher, however, can only point to the reality of the Path of Spirit, which each must find in his own Soul. The Buddha said, “Be ye lamps unto yourselves.” It is only by self-effort that human souls can transcend their limitations.

Many do not choose deliberately their thoughts, desires and acts, but are carried away by natural impulse. Essentially, however, we are thinkers and the mind can determine what we shall think and desire, what we shall say and do. For that, concentration is necessary; without it, we cannot hold great ideas in the mind or make it possible for the Soul to act through that mind. At present most of our ideas come from natural impulse, from sensation, emotion, etc. As human beings we should refuse to accept any picture, sensation or impression unless it approves itself to us. Let us watch our impulsive reactions and take time to think. As an old Chinese saying puts it, “Turn your tongue seven times in your mouth before you utter a word.”

Not only must the lower ebullitions be checked, but high thoughts must be gradually introduced into the mind to serve as a pattern for our thinking. Such truths can be found in all religious philosophies. The test of their truth is their universal validity. What can be applied by all Souls at all times, irrespective of climate, sex, financial status, etc., is part of Truth. Theosophy has culled the great fundamental truths

from the religious philosophies of the ages.

Theosophy presents three great ideas which can help to free our minds from misconceptions and enable us to breathe the free air of spiritual heights. These may be stated thus:

(1) The Soul of man is immortal.

(2) The principle which gives life, dwells in us and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent.

(3) Each man is his own absolute lawgiver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself.

It is sometimes claimed that we can learn to concentrate by fixing the mind on some trivial object. Theosophy says, try to steady the mind on as high an idea as you can reach. Take, for instance, the first of these three truths, which is often admitted without understanding and without acting in accordance with it. We must try to hold the concept throughout the day and in the subjective state of sleep. Because the Soul is immortal wrong impressions from senses and desires may last for ages. Realizing that the Soul is immortal, we recognize others as Souls, as fellow pilgrims in the Cycle of Necessity.

The idea that the principle of Life is within us shows us the necessity of developing a centre of consciousness within ourselves, to serve as a true refuge. Only when we have established relations with the God within ourselves can we express divinity in all the affairs of life and see God in all things and beings.

The proposition that man is his own absolute lawgiver is difficult to understand, but without grasping this central truth we cannot transcend our limitations and enter the kingdom of Those who have become more than men. That is the goal of our obligatory pilgrimage.

To turn all we possess into the channels of Universal Love becomes the business of our lives.

—JOHN WOOLMAN

THE TRAINING OF THE MIND

This is clearly a most interesting and practical subject as we are concerned with it in our daily life. Everything that we know of is a matter of training — from the acts of walking and talking to the highest power of meditation. In fact, the *Bhagavad-Gita* defines Yoga as skill in action. And we know we acquire skill in anything by means of practice.

The Voice of the Silence gives us the important teaching that to live on the earth is to walk the Path of dire probations. All life is made up of learning. For life teaches us a series of lessons which, if missed out, become veritable traps to ensnare the Ego. Rightly viewed, every incident or experience teaches man that separateness, or what he considers to be separateness, is the greatest of heresies. And as long as he does not learn this lesson, so long does he continue to be tried and tested in his day-to-day experiences in life.

Man is strangely poised between the animal and the divine. By virtue of his being a conscious perceiver and thinker, he has the power to perceive both below and above — the material and the spiritual. He can, therefore, choose to be merely bestial, or to get nearer and nearer to divinity. His progress is, therefore, said to be conditioned or checked by his Karma. Karma is nothing but the storehouse of all his past — his thoughts and deeds which, by the law of return of impressions, go to form his tendencies. These mental deposits becloud his perceptions.

Man's higher nature contains, besides an aspect of Manas, Atma — Spirit or Consciousness — and its vehicle, Buddhi, the light of Wisdom or intuitive omniscience. Manas, the vehicle of Buddhi, when incarnate, becomes twofold. "It gathers dust while it reflects. It needs the gentle breezes of Soul-Wisdom to brush away the dust of our illusions," says *The Voice of the Silence*.

The mind, environed by, and therefore having to depend upon, the senses, finds itself in the world of contacts, categories and contrasts — of heat and cold, light and darkness, likes and dislikes. In order to know the world of conditioned existence, the mind is obliged to deal with the senses: it attends to their inclinations and gets concerned with sense impressions; this arouses the passion to possess more and more; from passion arise anger and delusion; thence, loss of memory and of discrimination, thus leading to the "loss of all"!

This sorry plight or predicament of the mind is described by the *Voice*: The mind is the "Rajah of the senses, the Thought-Producer,

he who awakes illusion." It is "the great Slayer of the Real"; therefore, "let the Disciple slay the Slayer."

The drama of life on earth is for the evolution of the soul. In coursing through earth life, while the engagement of the mind with the senses is inevitable, the full benefit of the training of the senses will be available to the thinker if he frees his interests and concern from sense-objects.

The mind, or the principle of thought, will and feeling, can acquire training and facility of action in "six directions"; the Upanishads, however, designate the sum total of all such knowledge as *Apara Vidya* (i.e., lower knowledge). The higher knowledge (*Para Vidya*) is that by which the Imperishable *Akshara* is attained.

In the words of the *Bhagavad-Gita*:

The senses and organs are esteemed great, but the thinking self is greater than they. The discriminating principle is greater than the thinking self, and that which is greater than the discriminating principle is He [the Supreme Spirit, the true Ego].

All aspects of training which rob the mind of its rightful place and the purpose it is designed to serve are to be avoided. On the other hand, devotion to and aspiration for the Blessed Lords of Light and of Compassion so energize and inspire the mind as to transmute it ultimately into an alabaster vase for the Buddhic Light to shine through for the benefit of others.

Unveil, O Thou who givest sustenance to the Universe, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, that face of the True Sun now hidden by a vase of golden light, that we may see the truth and do our whole duty on our journey to thy sacred seat.

Well, since there are certain injurious and unhealthy states of mind which chill and darken the soul, it would be best to get rid of them — to make a clean sweep to the foundations, and give ourselves the benefit of a clear sky, light, and pure air to breathe. If not, we should reform and readjust them by turning them some other way about.

THE MESSAGE OF MOSES' BRAZEN SÉRPENT AS AN ASSURANCE FOR EVERLASTING LIFE

Children, when fascinated by Bible stories and other myths, do not suspect that there may be any other meaning to them than the obvious one. Even in grown-ups the tendency remains to take such stories literally. But, if they are sincere, they may read or hear something which arouses them from the stupor of ignorance, and then the veil which hid from them the deeper meaning of the stories is torn away. Such a thing may happen when they read the story of the Brazen Serpent as interpreted by H. P. Blavatsky in her books, *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*.

We read in the Christian Bible (*Book of Numbers*, Chapter xxi, verses 5-9):

And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the Wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

After that the "Lord," gathering the people together at the well of Beer, gave them water, and the grateful people of Israel sang this song: "Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it" (verses 16-17).

This story might sound like superstitious nonsense to us today, unless we try to understand its symbolic meaning.

Who was Moses? We can read in the Bible, in the *Book of Exodus*, the story of his birth, and how Pharaoh's daughter rescued him from the river Nile, where he was found floating in an ark of rushes. H.P.B. tells us that this story was taken from a much earlier one to be found

in the Babylonian fragments on tiles. She explains that Ezra, who mentions the Moses story, heard, while at Babylon, the allegory told of King Sargon, who lived far earlier than Moses, and applied it to the Jewish lawgiver. And she adds that "*Exodus* was never written by Moses, but re-fabricated from old materials by Ezra." (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 320)

H.P.B. tells us more in *Isis Unveiled*, where we read that "Moses is mentioned by several old historians as an Egyptian priest."

Moses, if not an Egyptian by birth, became one through being admitted into the priesthood, and thus was a SODALE. As an induction, the narrative of the "brazen serpent" (the Caduceus of Mercury or Aesclepios, the son of the sun-god Apollo-Python) becomes logical and natural. . . . Sod was the name for the great Mysteries of Baal, Adonis, and Bacchus who were all sun-gods and had serpents for symbols. The kabalists explain the allegory of the fiery serpents by saying that this was the name given to the tribe of Levi, to all the *Levites*, in short, and that Moses was the chief of the *Sodales*. (I. 555-56)

If we look up the words "Sod" and "Sodales" in *The Theosophical Glossary*, we find the following:

SOD. An "Arcanum," or religious mystery. The Mysteries of Baal, Adonis and Bacchus, all sun-gods having serpents as symbols, or, as in the case of Mithra, a "solar serpent." The ancient Jews had their *Sod* also, symbols not excluded, since they had the "brazen serpent" lifted in the Wilderness, which particular serpent was the Persian Mithra, the symbol of Moses as an Initiate. . . .

SODALES. The members of the Priest-colleges. . . . Those initiated into the *Sod* were termed the "Companions."

Origen, who was an Alexandrian Neo-Platonist, declared that Moses, besides teaching the covenant, communicated some very important secrets "from the hidden depths of the law" to the "seventy elders" (*Isis Unveiled*, I. 25-26). So, accepting the idea that Moses was one of those Adepts who transmitted the Law, speaking in parables and symbols, let us try to understand a little of the meaning of the Brazen Serpent in the light of the Ancient Wisdom.

The serpent has ever been the symbol of wisdom and prudence; it is the symbol of the Adept, and of his powers of immortality and divine knowledge. The power of "personified Wisdom" to call to life that which is dead is called by H.P.B. "a very deep metaphor if one

thinks over its meaning." "Every people of antiquity revered this symbol, with the exception of Christians, who chose to forget the brazen Serpent of Moses, and even the implied acknowledgement of the great wisdom and prudence of the Serpent by Jesus himself, 'Be ye *wise* as serpents and harmless as doves.'" (S.D., II. 364)

The serpent, being oviparous, became not only a symbol of Wisdom but also an emblem of the Logoi, or the "self-born."

The *creative* God emerges from the egg that issues from the mouth of Kneph — as a winged serpent — because the Serpent is the symbol of the All-wisdom. With the Hebrews he is glyphed by the "flying or fiery serpents" of the Wilderness and Moses. . . .

. . . the brazen serpent . . . lifted on a pole . . . had rather a reference to Mico the Egyptian egg standing upright supported by the sacred *Tau*; since the Egg and the Serpent are inseparable in the old worship and symbology of Egypt, and since both the Brazen and "fiery" serpents were *Saraphs*, the "burning fiery" messengers, or the serpent Gods, the *nagas* of India. It was a purely phallic symbol without the egg, while when associated with it — it related to cosmic creation. (S.D., I. 364)

Are the "fiery serpents" that bite the people of Israel and the "brazen serpent" that heals them distinct and separate? *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 414-15) provides the answer:

The great Serpent of the Garden of Eden and the "Lord God" are identical, and so are Jehovah and Cain ONE — that Cain who is referred to in theology as the "murderer" and the LIAR to God! . . . Jehovah turns into the fiery serpents to bite those he is displeased with; and Jehovah informs the brazen serpent that heals them. These short, and seemingly contradictory, statements in the Old Testament (contradictory because the two Powers are separated instead of being regarded as the two faces of one and the same thing) are the echoes — distorted out of recognition by exotericism and theology — of the universal and philosophical dogmas in nature, so well understood by the primitive Sages.

"The symbological meaning of the word 'brazen' [is] the feminine principle, and that of fiery, or 'gold,' the male one" (S.D., I. 364). A footnote explains:

"Brass was a metal symbolizing the *nether world* . . . that of the womb where life should be given. . . . The word for serpent was in Hebrew *Nakash*, but this is the same term for *brass*." . . . When, after studying symbology, the Christian reader comes to under-

stand the innermost meaning of these three symbols — *water, brazen, the serpent*, and a few more — *in the sense given to them in the Holy Bible*, he will hardly like to connect the sacred name of his Saviour with the “Brazen Serpent” incident.

Is the “brazen serpent,” then, no more than a phallic symbol? *The Secret Doctrine* explains:

As truly stated by Ragon, “the ancient Hierophants have combined so cleverly the dogmas and symbols of their religious philosophies, that these symbols can be fully explained only by the combination and knowledge of *all* the keys.” They can be only *approximately* interpreted, even if one finds out three out of these seven systems: the *anthropological*, the *psychic*, and the *astronomical*. The two chief interpretations, the highest and the lowest, the spiritual and the physiological, they preserved in the greatest secrecy until the latter fell into the dominion of the profane. Thus far, with regard only to the *pre-historic* Hierophants, with whom that which has now become purely (or impurely) phallic, was a science as profound and as mysterious as biology and physiology are now. This was their exclusive property, the fruit of their studies and discoveries. (I. 363)

In one of the above quotations, the “fiery” serpents are called “*Saraphs*, the ‘burning fiery’ messengers, or the serpent Gods, the *nagas* of India” — in other words, Wise Men, or Adepts. Perhaps we could say that the “fiery winged serpents” were “Wise Men” who chastised the people for their wrong-doing while Moses was up on the Mount, and that he, on his return, was able, by his magic power and knowledge, to mitigate in one way or another the “effects” of that chastising.

There are many meanings to be taken into account when considering these Serpents or Seraphim. In the *Glossary* we read that they are

Celestial beings described by Isaiah (vi. 2) as of human form with the addition of three pairs of wings. The Hebrew word is ShRPIM, and apart from the above instance, is translated serpents, and is related to the verbal root ShRP, *to burn up*. The word is used for serpents in *Numbers* and *Deuteronomy*. Moses is said to have raised in the wilderness a ShRP or Seraph of Brass as a type. This bright serpent is also used as an emblem of Light.

This idea that it is an “emblem of Light” appears to link up with what H.P.B. says in *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 364 fn.): “The Seraphim (fiery winged serpents) are no doubt connected with, and inseparable

from, the idea 'of the serpent of eternity — God,' as explained in Kenealy's *Apocalypse*."

Moses is said to have belonged to the tribe of Levites. "It is probable," says *Isis Unveiled* (II. 481 fn.) that

the fiery serpents or *Seraphim* mentioned in the twenty-first chapter of the book of Numbers were the same as the Levites, or Ophite tribe. . . . The names Heva, *Hivi* or Hivite, and Levi, all signify a serpent; and it is a curious fact that the Hivites, or serpent-tribe of Palestine, like the Levites or Ophites of Israel, were ministers to the temples.

And in *Isis Unveiled* (II. 481) we are told that the Brazen Serpent of Moses was worshipped by the Israelites as it was a symbol of "Esmun-Asklepius, the Phœnician Iao" ("the physical and spiritual Principle of all things"). It is thus a "Healer" and "Saviour."

The snake, which plays such a prominent part in the imagery of the ancients, was degraded by the absurd interpretation of the serpent of the Book of *Genesis* into a synonym of Satan, the Prince of Darkness, whereas it is the most ingenious of all the myths in its various symbolisms. For one, as *agathodaimon*, it is the emblem of the healing art and of the immortality of man. It encircles the images of most of the sanitary or hygienic gods. *The cup of health*, in the Egyptian Mysteries, was entwined by serpents. (*Isis Unveiled*, I. 157)

Another quotation, from *The Secret Doctrine* this time, also refers to the degradation of the Serpent into Satan:

But what will Christians make of the Brazen Serpent, the "DIVINE HEALER," if the Serpent is to be regarded as the emblem of cunning and evil? . . . If the followers of the Roman Church are taught that Mercury and Æsculapius, or Asclepius, who are, in truth, one, are "devils and sons of devils," and the wand and serpent of the latter were "the devil's wand," how about the "brazen serpent" of Moses? Every scholar knows that both the *heathen* wand and the Jewish "serpent" are one and the same, namely, the *Caduceus of Mercury*, son of APOLLO-PYTHON. It is easy to comprehend why the Jews adopted the ophidian shape for their "seducer." With them it was purely *physiological and phallic*. . . . The Occultists know that the serpent, the *Naga*, and the dragon have each a septenary meaning; that the Sun, for instance, was the *astronomical* and cosmic emblem of the two contrasted lights, and the two serpents of the Gnostics, the good and the evil one. (*S.D.*, II. 208)

Through all times it has been proved that our nature is dual, higher and lower. Sometimes the former gains the upper hand, and sometimes the latter. The scales can be balanced by the Real Ego in us, that Self-consciousness which can direct all human and worldly working. This is done by the union of the human with the divine.

In old Egypt, the God Nahbkoon, "he who unites the doubles," (astral light re-uniting by its dual physiological and spiritual potency the divine human to its purely divine Monad, the prototype "in heaven" or Nature) was represented as a serpent on human legs, either with or without arms. It was the emblem of the resurrection of Nature, as also of Christ with the Ophites, and of Jehovah as the brazen serpent healing those who looked at him. (S.D., I. 472)

If such is the deep and sacred meaning of the "brazen serpent," we can understand better why those who looked at it lived! It has a meaning for us even at the present time if we look upon it as a symbol of resurrection and an assurance of everlasting life by the power of the Divine within us. To undertake the difficult pilgrimage from the "wilderness" or desert of unconsciousness to the "well of Beer," or Knowledge, is man's task on earth.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. (*The Gospel According to St. John*, iii. 14-15)

The Brazen Serpent has a cosmical meaning as well, for it symbolizes not only the resurrection of man but also the rebirth of the entire cosmos and the starting anew of the various cycles of manifestation after long ages of rest or inactivity — the *Pralaya* of the Hindu. That state of wilderness which the Jews were complaining of, where there was no water, can be explained symbolically, for Moses taught that "only earth and *water* can bring a living soul." "The Lord sent fiery serpents," the "Lord" symbolizing the First Cause, expressing itself as an Eternal Potency and causing the eternal cycle of involution, evolution, and involution again, manifesting itself through all the Races, passing through the ups and downs of the wilderness of primitive innocence and self-consciousness. That Eternal Potency or invisible Fire makes Water vivify the dry wilderness — this Water representing the Wisdom held by high, sublime Souls — making the Soul of the World emerge from its static state into an active one, throughout Eternal Potency.

RELIGION—RELIGIONS AND RELIGIONISTS

Two statements by Madame Blavatsky give us useful hints to help us in distinguishing Religion from Religions. The first of these is taken from *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 4):

The "Wisdom-Religion" was one in antiquity; and the sameness of primitive religious philosophy is proven to us by the identical doctrines taught to the Initiates during the MYSTERIES, an institution once universally diffused. "All the old worships indicate the existence of a single Theosophy anterior to them. The key that is to open one must open all; otherwise it cannot be the right key." (Eclect. Philo.)

The second extract is from *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 1* (p. 3):

The assertion that "Theosophy is not a Religion" by no means excludes the fact that "Theosophy is Religion" itself. A Religion, in the true and only correct sense, is a bond uniting men together — not a particular set of dogmas and beliefs. Now Religion, *per se*, in its widest meaning is that which binds not only *all* MEN, but also *all* BEINGS and all *things* in the entire Universe into one grand whole.

From this we can gather that Religion in its truest sense tends towards Unity and Wholeness, whereas religions based on sets of dogmas and beliefs tend towards Particularity and Separateness. Religionists following their own particular set of dogmas and beliefs, therefore, cannot know what true Religion is until they learn to transcend these.

Adherence to any particular set of dogmas and beliefs deprives the individual of his spiritual birthright, which may be considered as the right to think and choose for oneself. Dogmas and beliefs demand absolute adherence, not an honest enquiry, and to transcend them we must reclaim the inherent spiritual right of our inner nature to examine them in its light. Once we mentally proclaim this and put it into practice, we no longer remain dependent on any "Revealer" or his "Revelations," but have assumed the right to seek out the very "Power of Revelation," not outside of us, but within our own minds and hearts. This "Power of Revelation" which, Krishna says, "arises spontaneously in the minds and hearts of his disciples" has been beautifully expounded by H.P.B. in her translation of some of the "Golden Precepts" given in *The Voice of the Silence*. This "Voice" once recognized within, will lead us from the "region of Asat, the false," into "the realm of Sat, the true."

How are we to distinguish the "Voice of the Silence" from that more common and vociferous "Voice of our Hidden Desires," as these latter are constantly clamouring for fulfilment? One way is to determine whether their dictates are personal or impersonal by nature, and if their fulfilment will help or hinder others. This requires, of course, a specialized type of knowledge and an active desire to be of help to others. In fact, all thoughts, feelings and actions which are conducive to the service of our brother man and are based upon the principle of Universal Brotherhood must, by this inner bond, draw us towards that "Power" which binds together not only all men, but also all beings making up a manifested world.

This binding Power is the very essence of true Religion, and ever tends towards greater harmony and all-embrasciveness, so that the outer barriers of distinctions fall away before its integrating force and light, and the true becomes distinguishable from the false, the real from the unreal.

In Nature, this power becomes Law and is the guiding intelligence behind all its forces, which in turn produce all the multitudinous and variegated forms that constitute its major kingdoms. Krishna expounds this same teaching in the *Gita*, where he says:

All this Universe is pervaded by me in my invisible form; all things exist in me, but I do not exist in them. Nor are all things in me; behold this my divine mystery: myself causing things to exist and supporting them all but dwelling not in them. Understand that all things are in me even as the mighty air which passes everywhere is in space. O son of Kunti, at the end of a kalpa all things return unto my nature, and then again at the beginning of another kalpa I cause them to evolve again. Taking control of my own nature I emanate again and again this whole assemblage of beings, without their will, by the power of the material essence [*Prakriti*].

How beautifully expressed by all the Great Teachers is this identical doctrine we can see by taking an extract from the sayings of Gautama Buddha, rendered in verse by Edwin Arnold in his famous book, *The Light of Asia*, where in Book the Eighth we find the following:

Before beginning, and without an end,
 As space eternal and as surety sure,
 Is fixed a Power divine which moves to good,
 Only its laws endure.

Finally, we can consider this short extract from the summarization of the Ten Items of *Isis Unveiled* (II. 590): "One common vital principle pervades all things, and this is controllable by the perfected human will."

Perhaps if we pursue the study of religions, with the preceding ideas in mind, we shall begin to perceive the unifying bond under their many forms and names, rituals and observances. The benefit of such a study should show itself in a wider and deeper range of thought, capable, when called upon, to penetrate the quagmire of dogmas and beliefs in which our brother men are caught, and to extricate them from it. Such a power comes from true knowledge or Self-Knowledge, and "Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child."

If there is no Religion Higher than Truth, then we must trace the truths underlying most of the religions of our present day. But we need the key that Theosophy which *is* Religion alone can give us to understand the truths which lie concealed behind the body of dogmas and articles of belief that the undiscerning average religionist considers to be the true faith.

"Seek, and ye shall find" is one of the articles of faith given by all the ancient MYSTERY schools, and once again reiterated by Theosophy. For one so seeking, many worth-while hints are given in *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 1*: "Is Theosophy a Religion?" Other hints may be found in *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 2*: "What Theosophy Is"; one such, on pages 1 and 2, quoting from H.P.B.'s monumental work, *The Secret Doctrine*, says:

But it is perhaps desirable to state unequivocally that the teachings, however fragmentary and incomplete, contained in these volumes, belong neither to the Hindu, the Zoroastrian, the Chaldean, nor the Egyptian religion, neither to Buddhism, Islam, Judaism nor Christianity exclusively. The Secret Doctrine is the essence of all these. Sprung from it in their origins, the various religious schemes are now made to merge back into their original element, out of which every mystery and dogma has grown, developed and become materialized.

A study of these pamphlets and of other Theosophical texts will certainly help the student to distinguish between Religion and Religions, as also to understand better what is meant when it is said: "*The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all.*"

KAMA LOKA—SUICIDES—ACCIDENTAL DEATHS

[EXTRACTS FROM A PRIVATE LETTER UPON KAMA LOKA AND SUICIDES]

[Reprinted from *The Path*, Vol. IV, pp. 254-56, for November 1889.—EDS.]

Suicides, although not wholly dissevered from their sixth and seventh “principles,” and quite potent in the spiritualistic séance room, nevertheless, until the day when they would have died a natural death, are separated from their higher principles by a gulf.

The sixth and seventh “principles” remain passive and negative, whereas, in cases of accidental death, the higher and the lower groups actually attract each other. In cases of good and innocent Egos, moreover, the latter gravitate irresistibly toward the sixth and seventh, and thus either slumber surrounded by happy dreams, or sleep a dreamless profound sleep until the hour strikes. With a little reflection and an eye to the eternal justice and fitness of things, you will see why.

The victim of accidental death, whether good or bad, is irresponsible for his death. Even if his death were due to some action of his in a previous life, still it was not the *direct* result of an act deliberately committed by the *personal* Ego of that life during which he happened to be killed. Had he been allowed to live longer, he might have atoned for his antecedent sins still more effectually; and even now, the Ego having been made to pay off the debt of his maker (the personal Ego), is free from the blows of retributive justice. The Dhyan Chohans, who have no hand in the guidance of the living human Ego, protect the hapless victim when it is violently thrust out of its element into a new one before it is matured and made fit and ready for that new place. *We tell you what we know, for we are made to learn it through personal experience.* Yes, the victims, whether good or bad, sleep to the *hour of the last Judgment*, which is that hour of the supreme struggle between the sixth and seventh, and the fifth and fourth “principles” at the threshold of the gestation state. And even after that, when the sixth and seventh principles, carrying with them a portion of the fifth, have gone into their Akasic Samadhi, even then it may happen that the “spiritual spoil” from the fifth “principle” will prove too weak to be reborn in Devachan; in which case it will then reclothe itself in a new body — the subjective “Being” created from the Karma of the victim (or no victim, as the case may be), and enter upon a new earth-existence — whether that be upon this or some other planet.

In no case, then — with the exception of suicides and shells — is there a possibility for any other to be attracted to a séance room. And it is clear that this is not opposition to our former teaching: “that while shells will be many, spirits very few.”

Referring now to men who fall victim to their vices, classed by some among “suicides”: In our humble opinion there is a great difference between suicides and those men who through excess of vicious indulgence fall into an early grave. We, who look at it from a standpoint which would not be acceptable to a Life Insurance Company, say that there are very few, if any, of the men who indulge in these vices, who feel perfectly sure that such a course of action will lead them eventually to premature death. Such is the penalty of illusion. They will not escape from the punishment for their “vices,” but it is the causes of the vices, and not the effect, that will receive punishment, especially an unforeseen though probable effect. As well call a man a “suicide” who meets his death in a storm at sea, as one who kills himself with overstudy. Water is liable to drown a man, or too much brain work to produce a softening of that organ which may carry him away. In such a case no one ought to cross the Kalapani, or even to take a bath for fear of getting faint in it and drowning. And there are such cases. If such a view prevailed no man would do his duty, least of all sacrifice himself for even a laudable and highly beneficial cause, as many of us do. Motive is everything, and man is punished in a case of direct responsibility and not otherwise.

In a victim’s case the natural hour of death was anticipated *accidentally*, while in that of the “suicide” death is brought on voluntarily and with a full and deliberate knowledge of its immediate consequences. Thus a man who causes his death in a fit of temporary insanity is *not a felo de se* to the great grief and often trouble of Life Insurance Companies. Nor is he left a prey to the temptations which assail us in the state of Kama Loka, but falls asleep like any other victim.

A Guiteau will not remain in the earth’s atmosphere with his higher principles over him — inactive and paralysed — still there. Guiteau is gone into a state during the period of which *he will be ever firing at his president* — thereby tossing into confusion and shuffling the destinies of millions of persons — when he will be *ever tried and ever hung*, ever bathing in the reflection in the astral light of his deeds and thoughts, and especially those in which he indulged in his last hour upon the scaffold. And it is so with every murderer who is hung or

otherwise despatched. Those who were vicious and not insane are only partly killed on execution. They live over their crime and their punishment in that plane of the astral light in which they are, and from there they affect all persons in any way sensitive whom they can get at. Especially at spiritualistic séances they surround the medium. And anyone who is naturally gifted with the power to see their plane of the astral light, or has the power from training, can see and hear over and over again the scenes of blood and punishment continually repeated in the vicinity of these unfortunates. In cases of collective murder, such as where many men enter or storm a building and cruelly kill the inmates after a prolonged struggle with the latter, the whole scene will often be re-enacted several times a year so strongly that many can see it with all its horrible details, and nearly all can hear the sounds, the groans, cries, falls of bodies, and slashing of human flesh.

THE POWER TO HOLD

Well, there are hardships a-plenty everywhere — illness, deaths, changed circumstances, psychic disturbances, but above all and beyond all these is the Holding Power that gives us the strength we need. We know the why of them all and simply wait on the destiny of human souls. And meantime, we know a few here as well as Otherwhere, who subordinate themselves to the Great Cause of Humanity.

The Power to Hold is natural and inherent in the right Theosophical attitude. It implies holding on to Wisdom Principles which are eternally true, without being affected by the ever-changing events of life, personal or racial. Each student has to learn, by degrees, that what is going to bits and pieces, what is vanishing in his own environment, is doing so by a process natural to material things; through perpetual change — *Nitya Pralaya* — we are learning to discern in embodied existence the abiding Self of Spirit which changes not. Things follow their own nature and Karma, and decompose themselves. Bodies of men, of races, of civilizations, all perish, but the Self ever abides, for It has the Power to Hold on. This Power may be described as made up of the Ideas — archetypal Ideas — which belong to the True and which, therefore, endure. They are of the substance of the Eternal and they enshrine the forces of Peace and of Progress. It is through them that the Self can be glimpsed, known and realized by the self.

“LUCIFER” CORRESPONDENCE

INDIVIDUAL PROGRESS AND SERVICE OF HUMANITY

[Reprinted from *Lucifer*, Vol. IV, pp. 87-88, for March 1889.

—Eds.]

The first object of the Theosophical Society being to promote the principle of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, how can it be reconciled with the aim that, at the same time, it presents in life to every individual being — the duty of developing his Higher Self, by the sacrifice of every selfish desire, by the conquest of all material interest, for the mere purpose of attaining a higher spiritual perfection, in order that this perfection should transform our *faith* in the spiritual world *into sight and knowledge*, and give us “life everlasting”?

How can one practise altruism and philanthropy, when one devotes one’s life to the cultivation of the inner spiritual being and the attainment of total indifference to the physical world?

Can there be a compromise? Can one divide one’s existence, and serve two principles at once? Now if the first, which is the altruistic principle, be taken as a beacon for one’s activity, which is the right way to apply it? If neglecting all personal interest, one works for the welfare of people, by trying to give them a happier earthly existence, may not the accusation be raised against one that it is too materialistic to work *only* for the practical welfare of people, as if men were born merely for enjoyment?

This reproach will be evaded if one holds to the theory that presents the reign of the moral law as the aim of an altruist. . . . But what is the right criterion for one’s judgment? . . . Can anybody be certain enough of possessing the real knowledge of truth, to demand blind submission to it from others? And what right has anyone to believe that his opinion must be accepted on authority — when he himself can err? If the Christian principle of giving away everything one possesses to the poor were universally practised, there would be no poor in this world to be benefited; or rather there would be nobody who would want to possess any worldly goods, and so the benefit of civilization would be lost! This seems very irrational. If, by a firm conviction in one’s spiritual immortality, and complete indifference to all practical benefit in this world, a certain calmness of mind can be attained but through moral suffering, has one a right to impose it upon others? To try to show them that all that makes the enjoyment of life is but temporary and illusive; that we are on the eve of losing everything we love; would not such thoughts darken the existence of the majority, and deprive it of all energy for action in practical life? In such a case, what is the use of our faculties and talents, which must have a physical plane to act upon? Must they be neglected

and stifled in order to give the spirit the liberty and the means to devote itself to the attainment of self-perfection, and the study of the higher spiritual knowledge that gives immortality?

BARBARA MOSKVITINOFF

5/17 February, 1889,

Petersbourg, Petite Morskaia.

The questions asked and the difficulties propounded in the foregoing letter arise mainly from an imperfect acquaintance with the philosophical teachings of Theosophy. They are a most striking proof of the wisdom of those who have repeatedly urged Theosophists to devote their energies to mastering, at least, the outlines of the metaphysical system upon which our Ethics are based.

Now it is a fundamental doctrine of Theosophy that the "separateness" which we feel between ourselves and the world of living beings around us is an illusion, not a reality. In very deed and truth, all men are one, not in a feeling of sentimental gush and hysterical enthusiasm, but in sober earnest. As all Eastern philosophy teaches, there is but ONE SELF in all the infinite Universe, and what we men call "self" is but the illusionary reflection of the ONE SELF in the heaving waters of earth. True Occultism is the destruction of the false idea of Self, and therefore true spiritual perfection and knowledge are nothing else but the complete identification of our finite "selves" with the Great All. It follows, therefore, that no spiritual progress at all is possible except by and through the bulk of Humanity. It is only when the whole of Humanity has attained happiness that the individual can hope to become permanently happy — for the individual is an inseparable part of the Whole.

Hence there is no contradiction whatever between the altruistic maxims of Theosophy and its injunction to kill out all desire for material things, to strive after spiritual perfection. For spiritual perfection and spiritual knowledge can only be reached on the spiritual plane; in other words, only in that state in which all sense of separateness, all selfishness, all feeling of personal interest and desire, has been merged in the wider consciousness of the unity of Mankind.

This shows also that no blind submission to the commands of another can be demanded, or would be of any use. Each individual must learn for himself, through trial and suffering, to discriminate what is beneficial to Humanity; and in proportion as he develops spiritually, *i.e.*, conquers all selfishness, his mind will open to receive the guidance of

the Divine Monad within him, his Higher Self, for which there is neither Past nor Future, but only an eternal Now.

Again, were there no "poor," far from the "benefits of civilization being lost," a state of the highest culture and civilization would be attained, of which we cannot now form the faintest conception. Similarly, from a conviction of the impermanence of material happiness would result a striving after that joy which is eternal, and in which all men can share. Throughout the whole letter of our esteemed correspondent there runs the tacit assumption that happiness in material, physical life is all-important; which is untrue. So far from being the most important, happiness in this life of matter is of as little importance in relation to the bliss of true spiritual life as are the few years of each human cycle on earth in proportion to the millions and millions of years which each human being spends in the subjective spheres, during the course of every great cycle of the activity of our globe.

With regard to faculties and talents, the answer is simple. They should be developed and cultivated for the service of Humanity, of which we are all parts, and to which we owe our full and ungrudging service.

The seasoned intellect long since has rejected as too simple the distinction conventionally made between man and the world. There is not one thing, man, and then another thing, the world. The two are somehow one. Man, understanding himself, to some extent will understand the world, just as knowledge of it must include a provision for himself. . . . It is not the same thing as himself, and yet if it is altogether alien it is nothing.

—MARK VAN DOREN

THE FOUR STAGES OF GROWTH

III.—THE SECRET DOCTRINE

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Aspiration and learning are followed by the hidden process of assimilation that transforms whatever "food" is taken into the system, into powers and faculties. In the first stage, perception was present, but not clearly focused. In the second, the soul turned outward to learn the art of relationship, to read and understand the diversity of Nature in the light of the one divine pattern. But in this third stage the goal of search changes direction, and in the inward turning, recognition is slowly fused into realization by the fire of experience. The being goes, as it were, to school again. But the Book he reads is no longer the Book of Nature, with its infinite variety of pictured pages, but the Book of Spirit, wherein a few signs and glyphs, so to say, contain the universal wisdom. The six surface differentiations of life lose their outlines as seeming realities and merge together in their approach to Unity, and it becomes increasingly difficult to express that real life, even partially, except in terms of paradox, metaphor and symbol, dynamic methods that convey two or more aspects of an idea at the same time.

For the secret doctrine is secret because it cannot be read with the two eyes of the mind — apprehension and reason — but only with the single eye of intuition. The latter pierces through the outer shell to the ever-throbbing heart within; to the magic of true Alchemy within the material chemical science; to the real Astrology that gives soul to the configurations and motions of astronomy; to the living reality of the invisible points of life ignored by modern biology, centres of intelligence and energy, the mirrors of the Universe, whose variously grouped reflections form what we call the kingdoms of nature. Intuition perceives Karma as ethical causation, the hidden mental, moral and spiritual cycles that run *pari passu* with the cyclic succession of events recorded by history; it views the geographical contours of the inner planes of being, and not merely terrestrial continents. It goes beyond the analysis of the psyche, the lower soul, to the invocation of the Nous in man, and, Pygmalion-like, breathes life into psychology. It knows language to be not just a philological thing of grammar, syntax and etymology, but a creative force, whose magical

evocative power lies in the very tone, colour and number, the vibratory ratio of the words. Intuition recognizes all the forces of physics — light, heat and sound, cohesion, gravitation, electricity and magnetism — as conditioned activities of the one vital principle, Cosmic Magnetism. Intuition responds to the Divine Vibration or Resonance, the Eternal Motion whose “breathing” is the basis of all change, all evolution and involution. And it senses in that universal, vital, “Life-wave” a Fohatic, energizing, guiding Intelligence. Its imagination draws its forms from the Akasic treasure house, the spiritual source of all “Ideas” and “Prototypes.” The Will it calls into operation acts from the one fount of power, Spirit itself.

The task of this third stage is to bring to birth the hitherto hidden life of Intuition. Under the veil of parable, myth and symbol, allegory and ritual, every exoteric religion has its secret heart, that worships the Unchanging Reality, Life in its essence as the ONE. Every science and branch of knowledge has its occult side that gives power over the causal forces of Nature, the manifesting “lives” as the Many. But there is a third aspect, whose other name is Compassion. In Cosmos a dynamic, intelligent, guiding force acts as the bridge between Spirit and Matter, electrifying and impressing the latter to reflect the former. The very movement of life is purposeful. In human evolution, all “Movements,” spiritual, mental, moral and physical, which have brought humanity nearer to the realization of its own divinity, with greater power and responsibility as regards Nature, have, as their inner soul, one Sublime, Eternal Movement, whose rallying cry is “Brotherhood,” and which is sustained and energized century by century by the Masters of Wisdom. All efforts for the betterment of mankind have had as their source the great Theosophical Movement, whose Founders and Foundations are the eternal Servants of Mankind, the intelligent link between Wisdom and its application.

For the records of the Secret Doctrine exist in three ways. Its spirit is everywhere, in the spirit, the innermost heart of all men, but as unconscious and dormant as Spirit itself, sleeping in the mineral. It shows as “the innate ideas” by which humanity acts, though most often without defining them even in thought. This is the unawakened, all-pervasive Wisdom. Then there is the outer body, the eternal verities expressed in buildings, carvings, hieroglyphs or writing, painted symbols, the printed book, or the spoken or chanted word. Even the very pattern of the stars, and the geometrical designs on which all composite things build themselves are records, or “signatures” which, if read

aright, give knowledge of the secret learning. For a body is necessary for the doctrine, as a focus, to make the point of contact, or as a burning-glass by which one may kindle the fire of knowledge within oneself. But in the third aspect, it animates the fully Self-conscious, Perfected Men, who can never misunderstand, obliterate or misuse it. The Teachers and the Teaching are one. If we seek to make the Secret Doctrine our own we must tread a threefold path. We must look for Truth in the hearts of all men — not merely in those congenial to us — just as closely as we search our own innate store of understanding. We cannot ignore the outer records, as some mystics do, for these form the dial that connects our line of ideation with any desired subject, the switch that brings into activity our own inner power. And, above all, we dare not scorn the help of the Teachers and their spiritual discipline, thinking our own intelligence subtle enough to disentangle the cipher that guardian hands have woven around the truths. We dare not consider our own discrimination and strength powerful enough to brave the dangers on the path. For there are dangers. It is no mere truism that knowledge is two-edged, rousing both bright and dark powers.

The real history of ancient nations, their knowledge and secret sciences, are to be found expressed only by means of symbol, allegory and parable, never in plain words. This was because the vibrations of the spoken word, its very sound and rhythm, have the power to awaken the corresponding forces in the ether, and these will bring about similar effects, whether good or evil. In the past it was forbidden to recite the details of historical, religious and real events in unmistakable words, lest the forces connected with these events should be attracted to reproduce them.

This explains another aspect of the secrecy around the Doctrine. Its truths are secret, because men are too materialistic, too blind to think the outer records anything but fantasies of form, or meaningless word-spinnings. But even much of the outer record has also had to be veiled or hidden completely by the Wise Ones, for even a partial, distorted understanding bestows a certain degree of power, unleashes forces enough to bring destruction, if operated for self-interest. So, in pity for mankind, Masters yield up their deeper secrets only to those who have proved by test and by trial that they can safely be trusted with the knowledge and the power that it brings.

This, then, is the stage of choice. The reversal of all the hitherto diffusive forces of life concentrates their rays into a path that stretches before the aspirant to Occultism. But he himself determines its direc-

tion. If his choice is a partial one, it will bring him back again to a starting-point in a greater or lesser cycle. He may become entangled in the fascination of the outer records. How many would-be Occultists, kabalists, psychic researchers and what not, occupy their time with "collecting" symbols and data, spinning out unending threads of speculation, classifying, correlating and tabulating vocabularies, drawing diagrams, arguing metaphysical terms and propositions! Learned they may be, but they have chosen the dead form and go out by the same door by which they entered, no wiser in the real sense than before.

There are those who choose the Open Path, that of Spirit divorced from Matter, the path of spiritual selfishness that seeks to lose itself in the bliss of the undifferentiated life of the ONE, while ignoring the pilgrim lives of the Many. Though its chooser dissolves himself in the Ocean of Spirit, yet the Open Path is a by-pass, and he will be again precipitated into the struggling stream of existence at a new period of evolution. And on the third path, that of self-conscious Occultism, there is yet another choice to be made. For magic is black or white, selfish or selfless, according to motive, and every aspirant will follow one or the other, Sorcery or true Magic. His own hidden motives now sprout into daylight and prove the nature of their seeds. Selfishness poisons the knowledge and the power, weights the soul with so great a load of dross that it cannot flow with the universal stream of progress, dams it until the flooding strength of life itself, aided by the Masters of Life as the servants of Karma, breaks up the obstruction, or until the Sorcerer beyond redemption, cutting himself off from his divine potentialities, becomes annihilated as a self-conscious unit.

There is but one true Path, narrow as a razor's edge indeed. We who desire to tread it must be prepared to give up all sense of self, to become an integral part of the "Movement," an impersonal beneficent force—must seek wisdom to share it, must dedicate our power to service, must follow in our predecessors' footsteps. An increasing awareness of the secret learning, a greater realization of the intelligent heart of nature, a deeper endeavour to impersonalize the motive, all these bring with them a fuller sense of the presence of the Master within, and of the Master without. Within us is the Warrior Soul, a living force and intelligence beyond all we think of as ourselves, our source of light and our "Self," whom we strive to remember, to hear and to obey. As the pupil finds his own inner ruler, so he develops the capacity to hear the voice of the Master, to bear His presence. As the rays of life converge, he begins to see the hidden path stretching ahead, stage by stage

—beyond the Individual Self (God as it is to him), its Father in Heaven; beyond the Star, the Sun, progress without end — probationers, chelas, Masters and yet beyond them the “Fathers” in an unending scale of Wisdom, Compassion and Service.

The path is one of joy and struggle — a path of reverent expectancy for the new life, the soul consciousness, so intimately blended with our own, and now beginning to awake to potency — a path of fierce battle, with many defeats and failures, against self-created evil, anger, envy, fear, black hate, stirred up from the hidden sediment of the nether soul — a path of despair and of agony at the distance between our bright self and the feeble, distorted, dirty reflection we produce and attempt to work with — a path of perseverance that continues indomitably even when hope seems utterly extinguished — a path of understanding by which we view more truly the struggles of our other selves, the hidden springs of their actions. Intuition is as sensitive for practical affairs as it is for philosophy. It hears the tone of fear under the braggart word; feels the soul-starvation behind the exhibition of greed; sympathizes, but without sentimentality, with the lost hopelessness that proclaims its desperation only by a loud ungraciousness. It perceives the virtue covered by the rough, uneducated husk, and acknowledges the inner claim of the unlovely, the boring and the fool. It knows when to speak and when to keep silent.

For the third stage is one of meditation. On the highest levels we speak of Samadhi, the state of faultless vision, but on even the lowest step it is the power by which the consciousness, no longer examining from outside, places itself in the middle, the heart of that which is meditated upon, to mingle and assimilate with it, and know it from within. In *Turiya*, thought and expression are not successive but a simultaneous experience. The Path of the Hidden Wisdom is travelled by becoming it. One does not acquire the Secret Doctrine, one can only be it.

Meditation is a fiery brooding on that majestic Self. We imagine ourselves into Its vastness. We conceive ourselves as mirroring Its infinitudes, as moving in all things, as living in all beings, in earth, water, air, fire, æther. We try to know as It knows, to live as It lives, to be compassionate as It is compassionate. We equal ourselves to it that we may understand It and become It. . . . By imagination and will we re-enter true being, becoming what we conceive of. —Æ

IN 'THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

"East is East and West is West: Is this true in an age of jets and mass communication?" was the subject of an unusual discussion programme jointly produced by All India Radio and the BBC, and broadcast on December 1. The participants were eminent men: scientist Vikram Sarabhai and editor Frank Moraes on the two-man Indian team, and writer Malcolm Muggeridge and London University's Oriental Studies Professor Cyril Philips on the two-member British panel.

The subject, although interesting, was so broad as to encourage tangential discussion on what Michael Stephens, the moderator at the London end, called a "wide variety of topics." As it emerged finally, the argument narrowed itself down to a discussion of the mutual historical impact of Britain and India.

Mr. Muggeridge was unsparing in his castigation of the traditional poverty of the British interest in India, and fearful of the same "odious scientific civilization" overtaking the entire world in the future. Mass communication, he thought, produced only the Sunday-colour-supplement culture, the lowest of the low.

Professor Cyril Philips saw the contact between East and West as essentially, and woefully, one only of minorities; science, which is identified with progress in the West and is beginning to co-exist with "philosophical fatalism" in the East, provides only a limited link, and may actually divide more in the future than it unites. Mr. Moraes hoped this would not be so. The British, he said, had rediscovered India for the Indians in the past, and the commonly shared pattern of scientific thinking could bring the East and West together in the future. Dr. Sarabhai, too, set firm store by science and technology. Mr. Stephens rounded off the discussion by suggesting a common concern for truth in both East and West; the distinction, therefore, in an age of the BBC and AIR, was redundant.

In the last of her five messages to the American Theosophists, H.P.B. made pointed reference to the task of drawing together the East and the West, and of Aryanizing Western thought. The Theosophical Movement of our era made an important contribution to this task of East-West rapprochement by pointing to the common source of Eastern and Western culture and knowledge. That source is the Wisdom-Religion, Bedhi-Dharma, which is neither Eastern nor Western, but Universal.

The election of the High Priestess of the Worshipful Coven of London Witches as an honorary member of the Oxford University Liberal Club draws attention to a curious feature of contemporary British life, namely, the public's growing acceptance of witches and witchcraft.

J. Errol Bowen, in his article "English Witches Are Buoyant!" (*The Times of India*, December 4), writes that the new liberalism got its sanction in 1951 when the repeal of the Witchcraft Act of 1735 made ritual witchcraft legal in Britain. Since then, the number of practising witches — a word that can be applied to both sexes — in the country has grown to an estimated 20,000, with witchcraft being regarded by some as just another religion.

Witchcraft as a religion [Mr. Bowen writes], and as described by the English witches themselves, is pagan, pantheistic and pre-Christian in origin. It must not be confused with Black Magic and the witchcraft practices of primitive societies. True, the use of incantations and spells, the making of effigies and magical use of herbs are common to both primitive witchcraft as practised in many parts of Africa and elsewhere, and to English witchcraft. But there the similarity ends, for the primitive witch works privately for private ends and not within the context of a religion with its own deities and rituals and body of believers....

Members of the cult come from all classes and professions, and include teachers, lawyers, civil servants, and housewives. They organize themselves in covens, each consisting ideally of 12 members and a high priestess. Though not illegal, their rites and rituals are shrouded in secrecy and are expressly forbidden to be revealed to anyone not initiated into the craft.

Throughout its history, witchcraft has been recognized as a fertility cult, and present-day ritual still reflects this fact.

Not only is witchcraft in Britain gaining new adherents every day, but it is stated that several British covens are planning a visit to the U.S. soon with the intention of forming a basic "Wica" organization and several covens of practising witches. It is estimated that there are already some 750,000 American witches.

In *Isis Unveiled* (I. 352-56), Madame Blavatsky, citing several authorities, shows that witch and wizard first meant a woman or man of wisdom. Usage limited this meaning for a time to those who possessed knowledge unusual but not unlawful; and then further limited it to those who gained their knowledge by an "express or implicit sociation or confederacy with some *bad spirits*." Thus, "witch" came to be "the name

of such as raise magical spectres to deceive men's sight... [the name of] women and men who have a *bad spirit* in them."

Many laugh at the idea of witchcraft as a childish fancy, beneath the notice of the modern mind, but it exists for all that, and it has its dangers. The intentional practice of witchcraft involves the conscious use of psychic powers — still latent in most men, developed in a few — and of the mesmeric fluid, for evil purposes.

... the word "witchcraft" ought, once for all, to be understood in the sense which properly belongs to it. Witchcraft may be either conscious or unconscious. Certain wicked and dangerous results may be obtained through the mesmeric powers of a so-called sorcerer, who misuses his potential fluid; or again they may be achieved through an easy access of malicious tricky "spirits" (so much the worse if human) to the atmosphere surrounding a medium. How many thousands of such irresponsible innocent victims have met infamous death through the tricks of those Elementaries! (*Isis Unveiled*, II. 117-18 fn.)

What is the relevance of Gandhi today and for the future? What inspiration can we draw from his life? What light can his thought and wisdom shed on our problems? These are the questions Shri R. R. Diwakar discusses in the October *Gandhi Marg*. The author draws attention to three aspects of Gandhi's life which are of the utmost importance. To search in a scientific spirit for the law of individual and social well-being and progress, to establish the truth of that law through love and non-violence, and always to return good for evil — this triple passion dominated his life from beginning to end.

Shri Diwakar goes on to say:

If Gandhi's life, thought and action are extremely relevant and useful for every human being who is self-conscious and who aspires after a higher, nobler and more exalted life than he may be living today, Gandhi's teaching as regards social life and its proper organization is equally positive, constructive and practical. ... Going along the path he had chalked out for himself, he arrived at a social philosophy which could be characterized as a synthesis between the needs, urges and aspirations of the individual and of the society of which the individual is an inseparable and indivisible part. He called it Sarvodaya — the rise and well-being of all. While it is the duty and responsibility of society to

plan for the fullest possible development of the best in every individual, it is equally necessary that the individual render back unto society what he, in fact, owes to society....

Man, the individual, is the centre of Gandhi's system of thought. The objective is the moral and spiritual development of man. Man is primarily his consciousness, his capacity to be self-conscious, and his built-in potentiality to judge between good and evil, between what will help him in his evolution to higher levels of being and what will obstruct his path. This gives him a leverage, not only to aspire after higher levels but to endeavour to attain the same. Gandhi believed in this self-effort and the path he outlined lay through ethical, moral and spiritual disciplines. The key-note of his ethics is love, which means near-identity of interest with every sentient being; this love has to be expressed in the form of service and sacrifice. His ethics in relation to material things and property consisted in his concept of trusteeship. Every human being is a trustee not only of his faculties and attainments but of everything he comes by. And trusteeship consists not only in using his powers and goods properly but in using them selflessly and for the well-being of all others....

Insistence on the truth of one's own experience through non-violence alone, even unto death, is the royal road he points out. He was as heroic in fighting the evil and injustice in the world outside as in conquering the evil and weakness in his own mind. The means he adopted satisfied the double demand, namely, that they should be truthful and that they should be pure, moral and constructive. Thus, in a world where science and technology have put into the hands of those in possession of wealth, power and authority weapons of coercion and destruction beyond ordinary conception, Gandhi's weapon of satyagraha is a boon....

The third aspect of Gandhi's teachings which can be taken note of here is his insistence on the resolution of all conflicts by peaceful means. He declared that war and violence never solve any problems. They create new ones and sow the seeds of future wars and the continuance of hatred....

In its totality, Gandhi's teaching is a highly inspiring one and serves as a signpost to humanity marching towards a better, happier and more harmonious world.

The Abu-Simbel temples, threatened to be engulfed in the rising waters of the Nile with the building of the High Dam at Aswan, have finally been saved in the greatest archæological operation of recent

times. The temples and colossi were cut up into sections — some weighing as much as 30 tons — and transported and reassembled at a new site. The project, which has cost about Rs. 26 crores, was backed by 51 nations. What is particularly remarkable is that no significant damage has been caused to the monuments during the course of the operation, and even the cuts which have been made into the stone are barely visible after reassembling.

“Where, in our age,” says *Isis Unveiled* (I. 542), “can we point to anything comparable to the rock-temples of Ipsambul in Lower Nubia? There may be seen sitting figures seventy feet high, carved out of the living rock. . . . Besides such titanic sculpture our own seems that of pigmies.” The temples of Egypt, India and Greece, *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 209 fn.) asserts, “are all the work of initiated Priest-Architects, the descendants of those primarily taught by the ‘Sons of God,’ justly called ‘The Builders.’” These temples stand today as mute reminders of the mighty civilizations of the past, and the world is the richer for having saved the Abu-Simbel treasures for posterity.

Professor V. E. Ovsienko, of the Moscow Institute of Economics and Statistics, refers in a letter printed in the August-September *World Health* (the Magazine of the World Health Organization) to a report on the Second World Population Conference in Belgrade. He writes:

Overpopulation is an elastic concept. I do not believe that there exists a country, even among states with a very high population density, which can be said to be “threatened” by overpopulation, particularly in such regions of the world as Asia, Africa and Latin America. In any case, not one of the countries which took part in the Belgrade Conference complained of overpopulation. Population density varies greatly in different regions of the world and in different countries. If we take Latin America, Africa and Asia, we see that population density indices are much lower than in Europe. In some countries of Africa and Latin America there is roughly one person per square kilometre, whereas in Europe there are countries with a population density of 300 persons per square kilometre.

The increase in population in Asia, Africa and Latin America raises problems not of overpopulation but of economic and social development.
